

WEEKLY CONFLICT SUMMARY | 11 – 17 MARCH 2019

WHOLE OF SYRIA SUMMARY

- x NORTHWEST | Despite further Turkish Military patrols in the Idleb pocket, a rise in airstrike activity was reported in areas dominated by the al Qaeda linked Hayyat Tahrir as Sham (HTS). Ongoing bombardments in government-dominated areas were also recorded, including at least one infiltration attempt by HTS.
- x SOUTH | Further protests against the Syrian government's arrest policy in the south of Syria occurred in As Sanamayn and Karak towns following last week's demonstrations in southern Daraa City and Tafs town. Low level conflict against individuals in southern Syria also continued this week, including two attacks claimed by the anti-government group Popular Resistance.
- x NORTHEAST | The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) advanced the last remaining ISIS encampment in Baghu Village in the southeast Deir Ez Zor Governorate. However, legacy landmine and improvised explosive devices, large numbers of IDPs

NORTHWEST SYRA 5

Government Initiated Conflict Events in Northwest Syria

Figure 3. Timeline of conflict activity in Idleb and Northern Hama Governorates since January 2018.

An increase in the number of airstrikes was reported at the start of the reporting period, with 24 cases recorded in three days between 10 and 13 March. This was the same number of airstrike events that had been recorded in the two weeks prior, between 25 February and 9 March. The majority of airstrikes focused on urban areas inside the pocket, especially Saraqib (9), Idleb City (7), Maraat al Numan (4), Kafr Nabal (1) and Ariha (1). Two airstrike events were also recorded near frontlines in Jisr Shaghur to the west of the pocket.

As a result of the growing intensity of the conflict in the Idleb pocket, 163 local humanitarian and civil society NGOs [released](#) a statement this week outlining the impact of the elevated levels of conflict on the humanitarian situation in Idleb, before calling on Russia and Turkey to abide by the September 2018 De-escalation Zone agreement.

In Latakia province, Syrian military forces [shot down](#) several drones outfitted to carry explosives over western frontlines on 15 March. This is the first time such devices have been seen since an attack on Russia's Hmeimim Airbase [August](#) 2018. In addition, a combination of HTS and other opposition armed forces carried out at least eight bombardments of government-controlled locations primarily in Tal Muraq, As Suqaylabiyah, Suran and Tal Salhab. One HTS infiltration attack also

week's protests in southern Daraa City and Tafs town over the Syrian government's ongoing arrest campaign and failure to provide adequate services

The timing and location of the protests are notable, as they occurred in the week commemorating the start of the Syria protests

(3), Ashara (1) and Hajin (1). During 2019, these districts have seen 96 (36%) conflict events out of a total of 295 events recorded since the SDF takeover of the region in 2018.⁴

WATCH LIST

The watch list outlines various dynamics the Carter Center is monitoring in the coming weeks:

NORTHWEST | Changes in types of conflict activity in the northwest, especially any increase in the number of airstrikes as well as any troop movements to frontline areas.

SOUTH | The ongoing protests against the government over detainees and arrests, especially in areas influenced by Russian forces, as well as any change in the number of attacks against individuals in the south.

NORTHEAST | Effects of the growing humanitarian situation from the Baghuz pocket on the security environment in northeast Syria as well as any change in the levels of asymmetrical attacks against the SDF along the Euphrates River.

⁴ Excluding the Baghuz pocket. Sizable counts of activity in 2019 have also occurred in Abu Kamal (24 percent) and Susat (23 percent) sub districts.